

Americans of German heritage have been, and continue to be, a vital component of the diverse cultural fabric that adorns the entire State of Ohio. Places like the German American Cultural Center are havens of memories and tangible bridges extending to every corner of the world, and are also places of real support and services for newly settled immigrants.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and tribute of every member of the Central Ohio Singers Association, past and present. These talented and dedicated singers have culled a legacy of cultural and historical preservation through melody and song, warmly reflecting their German heritage. This music of the heart adds color and depth to the American landscape, and serves to uplift our entire community.

STOP THE THEFT OF OUR SOCIAL
SECURITY NUMBERS ACT OF 2005

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Stop the Theft of Our Social Security Numbers Act of 2005" (H.R. 2518).

Many of my constituents have alerted me to a serious attack on our personal privacy, and an insidious practice that has become known as identity theft. Amazingly enough, this theft is facilitated by a public agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, which aids and abets this theft not through the Internet or any high-technology means but through the U.S. Postal Service. By including our Social Security numbers on Medicare related mailings, the Department of Health and Human Services places thousands of Medicare beneficiaries at risk of becoming victims of identity theft.

To combat this problem, I have introduced this bill which prohibits the Department of Health and Human Services from including our Social Security numbers on Medicare related mailings the department mails us every year.

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes of this decade. It creates a nightmare for those who become victims. Identity thieves make off with billions of dollars each year and each day more than 1,000 people are being defrauded. In fact, the Federal Trade Commission recently listed identity theft as the top consumer complaint. With just your name and your Social Security number, a thief can open credit lines worth \$10,000, rent apartments, sign up for utilities, and even earn income. Your credit rating is ruined, you risk being rejected for everything from a college loan to a mortgage, and it is up to you to fix it all. Law enforcement will generally not pursue these identity theft cases.

Having your Social Security card number on a Medicare related mailing puts people at a higher risk for identity theft. Mail that is lost or stolen with personally identifiable information like a person's Social Security number can be used by criminals to steal someone's identity and commit fraud.

The Department of Health and Human Services has said that the health insurance claim number on Medicare related mailings is a variation of the recipient's Social Security number, not the actual number. This agency has noted

that the number may be based on the Social Security number of a spouse or parent; however, more often than not, the number the agency uses is the person's Social Security number preceded or followed by a single letter of the alphabet. The agency has said that it has no immediate plans of stopping this practice. What more can the Department of Health and Human Services do to aid the theft of your identity? Give thieves and unscrupulous people your mother's maiden name?

Not to long ago, we were experiencing the same problem with the mailing labels sent to us from the IRS. I was told that there was no way the IRS would change this practice. I found it incomprehensible that neither the agency nor its contractor would change a computer program for booklets that would be mailed out to millions of Americans all over our Nation. After I introduced a bill to require the IRS to stop putting our Social Security numbers on its mailings, the department finally found a way to stop this bad practice.

Many commercial health insurance companies have already taken steps to remove Social Security numbers from their mailings as well as all other forms of client identification. Some States prohibit companies from displaying Social Security numbers internally and assign consumers unique numbers that would appear on Medicare cards. It is time for the Federal government to do its part to stop identity theft and help protect an individual's personal privacy.

There is no excuse for leaving Medicare beneficiaries vulnerable to identity theft with a thinly disguised Social Security number on Medicare related mailings.

My bill will force the Department of Health and Human Services to make this change to protect one of the most precious keys to our personal information, our Social Security number.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
AMBASSADOR MILTON A. WOLF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Milton Wolf, a friend and a great leader in the Greater Cleveland community and around the world. Ambassador Wolf led a multifaceted life that included time as a soldier, meteorologist, educator, real estate developer, fund-raiser, philanthropist, humanitarian, peacemaker, and family man. He grew up in Cleveland's Glenville neighborhood, the son of Cleveland policeman Sam Wolf and his wife Sylvia. His father worked for a time as a vice detective under Eliot Ness, then the Cleveland safety director.

The outbreak of World War II coincided with Milton's graduation from Glenville High School. Young Milton enlisted right away into the Army Air Corps where he served as a meteorologist. Upon his return from the war, he resumed his studies, ultimately earning his doctorate in economics from Case Western Reserve University. His early career focused on real estate development, but he also became interested in politics and raised money for political campaigns, including Jimmy Carter's successful presidential race in 1976. In 1977, President

Carter appointed him as ambassador to Austria, a post he kept until 1980. During his service there, he received Austria's Great Gold Medal of Honor with Sash for "most distinguished and successful contribution toward the enrichment of Austro-American relations." Ambassador Wolf played a key role in arranging details of the meeting in Vienna between President Carter and Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev, for the signing of the Salt II Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. Ambassador Wolf was decorated in 1997 with the Austrian Cross of Honor for Science and Art First Class in recognition of his scholarly work in economics, his strong ties to the diplomatic community and his philanthropic activities.

Ambassador Wolf was strongly committed to local and international institutions. He recently made major endowments to Cleveland Clinic's heart center and to a faculty chair at Cleveland State University. He served as chairman of the board of trustees of the Ohio State University where he oversaw the university's \$500 million investment program in the early 1990s. He served on the boards of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, Case Western Reserve University, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, and the Mount Sinai Medical Center. Ambassador Wolf also served as chairman of the Council of American Ambassadors, governor of the United Nations Association of the United States of America, and member of the board of directors of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University. He served as president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, overseeing \$70 million in assistance for needy Jews and others in more than 50 countries. In 1994, the committee honored him with its Raoul Wallenberg International Humanitarian Award.

Ambassador Milton A. Wolf will be greatly missed in Greater Cleveland and around the world. He was preceded in death by his wife of 53 years, Roslyn. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring and remembering Ambassador Wolf. Please also join me as I offer my deep condolences to his son, Leslie, his daughters Caryn, Nancy, and Sherri, his brother Sanford, his five grandchildren, and his extended family and many friends.

RECOGNIZING TONY SWAFFORD
AND BETTY TUNNICLIFF

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service and commitment of Tony Swafford and Betty Tunnichliff to the education community. Mr. Swafford and Ms. Tunnichliff has dedicated 33 and 23 years of service, respectively, educating and mentoring our Nation's youth.

Serving as both administrators and teachers, Mr. Swafford and Ms. Tunnichliff retire at the end of this school year. I would like to take this occasion to thank them for their years of promoting education and the youth of Denton.

In taking time to direct the Denton Independent School District, both Tony and Betty established precedence in administrative standards that will not soon be forgotten. Their